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4 1966

ENDRANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT:

Conversation with Lieut. Concral Mossel German Federal Republic Representative on the NATO Military Standing Group

- Mensel and his wife, Rosemary, dired with us at my home on 25 October 1966.
- Germany to visit Bonn and Minich; he had a 4 November appointment with Gehlen in Munich.
- 3. Wessel said that the decision announced the previous day to move the NATO Political Council from Paris to Errosels now cleared the way for a decision on the future of the Military Standing Group; so believes that it is probable that it will be moved to Brussels to be more closely associated with the Council.
- A. Repack believes his own assignment to the Standing Group will logically be terminated at the time the move to Brussels is made. He would prefer to remain in Washington in this assignment as long as the Group remains here; since he already has been here three years he hopes that he is not involved in a move to Brussels.
- 5. In August 1966 Defense Minister von Hassel wrote a letter to Chancellor Erhard recommending that Wessel be designated as the successor to Gehlen as head of the German Intelligence Service. This proposal apparently emerged from the discussions leading to the designation of Trettner's successor. Because of his rank, Wessel can logically be considered only for three posts in either Benn or the HATO structure; all have fairly recently been filled. Messel said that he had a long letter from Gehlen the provious week which ended with an assurance that Cohlen's plans for Wessel DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY

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had not changed. Since Gehlen has consistently for many years apolton of Westel as his probable successor, this would seem to indicate that Cehlen is also aware of recent activity in this matter.

6. Wessel has taken no actions in recent yeard to support his own tandidacy for the ton END post. His wife in strongly opposed to his return to the END; she has been a highly successful hostess in Washington and obviously enjoys an existence unburdened by the demands of life in the END with which she is quite familier.

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- 7. Messel assumes that Gehlen will stay on until at least early 1968; his own assignment to the END in 1967 as deputy is an obvious possibility. Also, he does not rule cut the possibility that General Wendland (@ Mondt, @ Molm) might be named to the number 1 post of the END if Gehlen ratires. It is my impression that Wessel is entirely relaxed and quite flexible regarding his own future.
- 8. I place Wessel among the two or three most intelligent, belanced and pophisticated senior German officials known to me. His years in Paris with Speidel, his expersince in Bonn as J-2 and later a Division Commander, and, finally, his years in Webhington on the NATO Standing Group have brought him a long way from his not undistinguished beginning as the youthful chief of "Foreign Armies East" Guring the closing months of WW II.
- g. I have no evidence that Wessel has remained in close tower with the BMD; specifically, there have been no indications of his conversations with me having been reported to Gehlen. While his relations with the local BMD representative, I, have been cordial, it is quito clear that he does not report to him. For example, Wessel's conversation with the Director leading to the invitation to Gehlen to vicit Washington was not communicated by Wessel to either I or to Gehlen.
- 10. More Wessel to emerge as head of the German Scrivits. I would have quite a lot to say regarding the consequences of this appointment to CIA and to the USS and the manner in which CIA's relations with the Bid, under his leadership, should be conducted."

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political leadership would not seem to be damaging to the prospects of either Gehlen or Wessel. I would guess that Wessel, ht this point, enjoys respects in many German government and political circles-quite independent of, and in some instances in spite of, his long association with Ochlen.

/E/ James H. Critchfield

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